

Amendments to the Claims

1. (currently amended) A loop for pointing devices for guiding a cursor on a computer screen or the like, comprising:

a flexible fabric support material in the form of a cylinder having a longitudinal axis and capable of being axially moved and circumferentially rotated around two axially oriented supports that extend parallel to the longitudinal axis for stretching a cross-section of the loop to an oval shape,

said flexible fabric support material having on an internal surface thereof a number of mutually circumferentially spaced apart, axially elongated, stiffening strips ~~or equivalent means~~ substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis for stiffening the loop in its axial direction, said stiffening strips ~~or equivalent means~~ each having a circumferential width, and said stiffening strips ~~or equivalent means~~ having an axial length greater than the collective circumferential widths of a plurality of stiffening strips ~~or equivalent means~~;

said flexible fabric support material having on an external surface thereof a number of mutually circumferentially spaced apart friction elements; and

said stiffening strips ~~or equivalent means~~ being made of a relatively low friction material for low friction sliding on a support surface, and said friction elements being made of a relatively high friction material for providing high friction engagement by a user's finger.

2. (currently amended) The loop according to claim 1, wherein longitudinal zones defined by and between the stiffening strips ~~or equivalent means~~ have friction material on the external surface of the flexible fabric support material, and the friction elements protrude away from the flexible fabric support material to a greater extent than the friction material within the longitudinal zones.

3. (previously presented) The loop according to claim 1, wherein the friction elements are in the form of friction strips arranged above and aligned with the stiffening strips.

4. (withdrawn/ previously presented) The loop according to claim 2, wherein the friction elements are in the form of friction islands arranged above the strips.

5. (withdrawn/ currently amended) The loop according to claim 1, wherein the flexible fabric support material is formed from a substantially rectangular piece of cloth that has opposite edges thereof joined together at a joint to form a cylinder, and at least a portion of the joint is situated over one of the stiffening strips currently amended.

6. (cancelled)

7. (withdrawn/ previously presented) The loop according to claim 1, wherein individual threads of the flexible fabric support material are arranged at an angle of at least 20 and at most 70 degrees to the strips.

8. (withdrawn/ previously presented) The loop according to claims 1, wherein individual threads of the flexible fabric support material are spaced apart a distance D, where D is larger than 0.05 millimetre on the average.

9. (withdrawn/ currently amended) The loop according to claim 8, wherein the flexible fabric support material is a Georgette type of fabric.

10. (previously presented) The loop according to claim 1, wherein the relatively high friction material contains small reflecting particles that are separated sufficiently to give rise to individual light points on a detector chip of an optical detector.

11. (cancelled)

12. (cancelled)

13. (currently amended) The loop according to claim ~~[[11]]~~ 1, wherein the axial length of the stiffening strips is considerably greater than the circumferential width of the stiffening strips.

14. (currently amended) The loop according to claim [[11]] 13, wherein longitudinal zones defined by and between the stiffening strips have friction material on the external surface of the flexible fabric support material, and the friction strips protrude away from the flexible fabric support material to a greater extent than the friction material within the longitudinal zones.

15. (currently amended) The loop according to claim [[11]] 1, wherein the friction elements are in the form of friction strips aligned with the stiffening strips.

16. (currently amended) The loop according to claim [[11]] 1, wherein the friction elements are in the form of friction islands arranged above the stiffening strips.

17. (currently amended) The loop according to claim [[11]] 13, wherein the flexible fabric support material is formed from a substantially rectangular piece of cloth that has opposite edges thereof joined together at a joint to form a cylinder, and at least a portion of the joint is situated over one of the stiffening strips.

18. (currently amended) The loop according to claim [[11]] 1, wherein the flexible fabric support material is made from thin cloth.

19. (previously presented) The loop according to claim 18, wherein individual threads of the thin cloth are arranged at an angle of at least 20 and at most 70 degrees to the stiffening strips.

20. (previously presented) The loop according to claim 1, wherein the friction elements are formed by a coating of varying thickness on the external surface of the flexible fabric support material.

21. (previously presented) A pointing device for guiding a cursor on a computer screen or the like, comprising a support having rounded edges, and the loop of claim 1 trained around the rounded edges and slidably supported by the stiffening

strips or equivalent means on a planar central portion of the support extending between the rounded edges.